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JEWISH HYGIENE.

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[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

The laws of Moses form excellent precepts for preserving health of body and contentedness of mind. Theologians have paid much attention to the latter, yet it seems to me that physicians have not given to the former the investigations it deserves.

To draw attention to the subject, I propose to make some remarks in the following order:—1, personal cleanliness; 2, circumcision; 3, the separation of the healthy from the diseased, and from whatever the latter come in contact; 4, the purification of women after confinement, and at other seasons; 5, prohibition of marriage within certain degrees of consanguinity; 6, prohibition of the flesh of animals which are peculiarly prone to disease themselves, or to produce disease when they are eaten; and afterwards to consider the propriety of increasing the duties of city inspectors.

1. *Personal Cleanliness.*—Frequent ablutions are not only often prescribed in the law, to remove impurities which might have been communicated by contact; but are also considered marks of hospitality, and religious obligation. Abraham offered water to the angels, and Moses, when he set apart Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, washed them with water. From these examples no devout Jew will utter a prayer, or partake of a meal, without having previously washed his hands. Near the entrance of every synagogue there is a vessel, from which the members draw water to wash their hands before commencing their devotions.

2. *Circumcision.*—Owing to the habits of cleanliness produced in all classes of society since the introduction and cheapness of cotton shirting, we have now few opportunities of witnessing the bad effects of offensive matter collected under the prepuce; yet we occasionally meet with cases where it would have been well, if the patients had been early circumcised. Among the many Jews who have applied to me for advice, I have never seen any case of venereal disease.

I was once invited to witness the circumcision of a young man who, having become enamored of a beautiful Jewess, had resolved to embrace the Hebrew religion, as she had no other objection to her suitor than that he did not belong to her people. At 11 o'clock in the forenoon, the company, which consisted of the operator, a rabbi with a long beard, two or three of their acquaintances, and myself, met at an appointed place, where we were introduced to the patient and some of his intended's friends. After a few minutes conversation, a few of us went with the proselyte to another room. The patient stood on a chair; some words of Hebrew were spoken by the rabbi, and the foreskin was removed by the operator, in a manner that, for dexterity and speed, would not have been surpassed by a Liston or a Mott. The foreskin was stretched forward as much as possible, and, for the protection of the glans, drawn through a cleft piece of silver similar to the instrument with which we divide the frænum linguæ. The extremity of the portion drawn through the cleft was then held with the left hand, while with the right, the foreskin was removed by a single stroke of a scalpel. The outer skin retracted behind the glans of its own accord, but the lining portion was divided on the dorsum with scissors. The remains of the prepuce were then drawn back as far as possible, and the operation was completed. The resulting hæmorrhage was soon checked by lint and cold water. I have since had occasion to perform the operation for the preternaturally elongated prepuce of a gentile, but am sorry to say that in comparison with the Jew I cut a very sorry figure.—The patient was put to bed, and after having washed their hands, we proceeded to another apartment, where we met the rest of the company, who were all Jews and Jewesses except myself. After the example of Abraham on the circumcision of Isaac, we were invited to a bounteous feast, which consisted of delightfully-prepared mocha coffee, hot rolls, buttered toast, cheese, and fish in various forms, as boiled, fried and baked. The rabbi occupied the head of the table, and having pronounced a blessing in Hebrew, he took a loaf of twisted bread, and breaking off a portion and dipping it in salt, he handed it to his nearest neighbor, and proceeded in the same way to break and dip for all the rest. I observed that they merely tasted the sacrifice seasoned with salt, and helped themselves to something more palatable. As the company was very communicative, I ventured to ask if there was among the Jews a period of abstinence from animal food, like the lenten fast. They said that from the passage "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," three several times repeated, and from more direct expressions in the Talmud, it is not customary for Jews to eat animal food and milk or its products at the same time. If they partook of animal food, it would not be proper to drink milk in their coffee, or take butter on their bread.

The unhealthiness of the practice of eating thickly-buttered bread with meat, which, though it is never witnessed among the refined, still prevails among the vulgar, will be seen as we proceed.

3. *The Separation of the Healthy from the Diseased.*—To prevent the spreading of a species of leprosy, the utmost diligence was exerted to keep the leper separate from the healthy. Whoever was effected with this dreaded complaint, was obliged to dwell without the camp, wearing, as a mark of distinction, a covering on his upper lip; and when he was approached, to cry out "unclean." When the plague of leprosy was healed,

before he who had been a leper could be admitted to the congregation, the law was, "he shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water," "and tarry abroad out of his tent seven days." And again, on the seventh day, "he shall shave all the hair off his head, and his beard, and his eyebrows, even *all* his hair shall be shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean."

The marked disgrace of dwelling without the camp and wearing a covering on the lip, would doubtless have a very great effect in inducing cleanliness, and to avoid contact with the affected. Similar cautions are given against scald head and some other complaints, which are mentioned in the fifteenth chapter of Leviticus.

4. *The Purification of Women after Confinement and other Seasons.*—The occasional ravages of puerperal fever, which brings such distress to families and disgrace to even the most learned accoucheur, show the propriety of considering a woman unclean, for a certain period after her confinement. I know a most accomplished physician who lost seven females in succession, even though he changed his clothes and took a warm bath; and who only recovered his purity by residing some time in the country. These unfortunate cases injured his good name, and he was charged with the greatest ignorance. Another practitioner was some time ago called to attend the grand-daughter of one of the most influential men in the United States. The patient became affected with puerperal fever, and although everything was done that could be accomplished by the amplest means and skill, she did not recover. As mankind in general are practical and not speculative, the death was attributed to the ignorance of the physician, and not to violation of the statutes of Moses.

There are other seasons when, by the Jewish law, a woman is considered unclean. When she is unwell, not so much as her hand or her garment must be touched during her uncleanness and the seven subsequent days of purification. The reason for this is, that woman, who is depending on man for support, may be preserved from brutality. Throughout nature, the male is violent in his lusts, and when she is without protection, the human female is worse off than the beasts of the field who can provide for themselves.

5. *The prohibition of Marriage within certain degrees of Consanguinity.*—The marriage of relations is another law which requires serious attention. Idiocy, deafness, blindness, or other imperfect development of the offspring, are results which we frequently witness. In one family I observed three cases of congenital blindness in the children of cousins. When I was informed by the mother that she was related to her husband, I stated to a physician, who was present, that the relationship of the parents was the cause of the blindness; she was very much offended, and asked "if I really did believe any such superstition?" At a late visit to the Boston Eye Infirmary, I saw one example of a family who were blind from the same cause. In the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb there are several pupils who owe deafness to the relationship of their parents.

6. *Entire prohibition of the flesh of such Animals as are peculiarly prone to disease themselves, or to produce disease when they are eaten.*—By referring to the eleventh chapter of Leviticus, it will be seen that among the inhabitants of the waters, those which have neither fins nor scales are considered an abomination. All carnivorous quadrupeds and birds are forbidden. Among vegetable feeders, those that are particularly interdicted are the camel, the coney, the hare, which is a species of the same animal, and the swine. The interdicted inhabitants of the waters most easily obtained are shell-fish, which are so apt to produce diseases of the skin that intelligent physicians caution those who are affected with cutaneous diseases to guard against them. The prohibition of shell-fish as articles of diet among a people disposed to leprosy, is of itself evident, if there were no other reasons, why they should be avoided ; but they are usually eaten without mastication, and without a sufficient quantity of vegetable food, so that they present to the stomach too great a quantity of nutriment in too small a compass. For producing what is called the stimulus of distention, to the stomach, when supplied with aliment too nutritious, the Laplanders, who cannot procure a sufficient quantity of vegetables, grind up the bones of fish and other animals, and use them for bread. The injury to the lungs from too nutritious diet, in a temperate climate, has been well explained by Liebig, and will be soon considered. It is well known that from the occasional poisonous quality of the medusæ on which shell-fish feed, whole families are sometimes made dangerously ill, and some have died. "The habits and modes of living of the French inhabitants of that part of the Province of New Brunswick where leprosy now prevails, have," it is said in the report which I copy from the last New York Journal, "always been pretty much the same, since its first settlement, with those in other parts of British North America, except that the fish which constitutes almost their sole article of food is not, perhaps, of the same wholesome quality as among some of their neighbors, owing to their poverty, which often prevents them from procuring the means necessary to preserve it for use." Though the kind of fish on which the inhabitants live is not stated, yet from the bay and river situation of the district between the "Bay of Chaleur and Miramichi River," now affected with a most alarming species of leprosy, we may suppose that at least some of them are those which are interdicted in Scripture. It might be an interesting subject of inquiry, if what is called salt rheum, leprosy, and other affections of the skin, are not owing to the use of shell-fish and to pork, as both have been long notorious for producing cutaneous diseases.

The flesh of animals which feed on carrion is so disgusting, that it is unnecessary to make any further comment than that many of these animals are peculiarly subject to hydrophobia, which may be communicated not only by wounds, as we hear every season, but, in a case related by Dr. Currie, it was caused by a portion of the saliva of a rabid animal being applied to the lip of a young female, who afterwards died of this horrible disease.

The vegetable feeders interdicted are, I believe, all peculiarly prone not only to scrofulous disease of the lungs, or what is commonly called consumption, but also to scrofula in other parts of the body. I have had no opportunity of examining the camel, but when I was a boy the rabbit was the subject of surgical operations. Although I was not then acquainted with pathology, I can well remember that the wounds exhibited a decidedly scrofulous character. It is stated, I believe by Dr. Ramsbotham, that the rabbit, when confined, is very liable to consumption.

The pig is so remarkable for its susceptibility to the formation of tuberculous matter, that from scrofa, the Latin term for this animal, the disease scrofula has obtained its name. It is said that even hot drinks or sudden changes in temperature will render its flesh diseased and unfit to be eaten. What is called measled pork consists in the flesh being studded all over with points of disease, yet we seldom hear of such a carcass being destroyed; it is usually salted and sold, if the owner has intelligence enough not to make use of it himself.

The ingenious comparison of the lungs to a furnace and of food to fuel, by Liebig, shows the necessity of abstaining from too much greasy diet. Wherever the temperature is low, the combustion of fat and other highly nutritious matter is necessary to keep the body at a proper temperature; but where the weather is generally mild, the fat overheats the furnace or oppresses the lungs, and renders them liable to inflammation. In mild climates a person who would continue to take even half the quantity of grease consumed by an Esquimaux, would soon forfeit his life.

Another illustration of the effect of too much nutritious food on the lungs, may be taken from the treatment of diabetes. For the cure of this complaint a diet exclusively animal was formerly recommended, and the disease was ameliorated, but the patients were very liable to be cut off by inflammation.

The food of hogs is of the most loathsome description. Their nourishment is drawn sometimes from wholesome materials, but frequently from offal, poultices and filth of every kind. Those who advocate the necessity of hogs acting as scavengers to the city, do not consider that they may be recommending the rehashing of garbage for their own stomachs.

It is said that "one great object of the Puritans in coming to New England, was the establishment of a religious commonwealth as nearly upon the model of that of the Jews as the difference of circumstances would admit." To say nothing of other innovations among the descendants of the first settlers, forbidden food is presented at almost every meal. Pork with beans; pork in gravy; pork with fish; pork with chicken; and, it is said, though I do not believe it, pork with molasses.

We must not put too much blame on the pig, when the flesh of all animals is also subject to disease. Tubercles in the lungs and liver, and collections of purulent matter, are frequently observed in oxen. When a butcher has paid his money for an unhealthy animal, it is not very probable that, out of pure philanthropy, he will throw it into the river, and as it would not be sealed by the Jewish inspector, it is dressed up with the fat of other animals and sold out to the gentiles.

Some years ago, while investigating the manner by which the eye is adjusted to distances, I went for recent eyes to a slaughter house. On the lower jaw of one of four or five heads, which were skinned and cut off, I observed an immense cancerous tumor. The butcher politely told me he was not at liberty to sell the eyes, as the heads had been sold to a sausage-maker, who resided at such a place. In the evening I called at the shop of the sausage-maker, and being anxious to cut out the eyes myself, I was admitted through a dark passage to the manufactory. Here all the senses were unusually impressed; the ears were saluted by the guggling sound of what was boiling in large cauldrons; the vapors arising from these cauldrons were not particularly agreeable to the olfactory or lingual nerves. A solitary lamp shed its dismal light through the misty atmosphere, and partially exhibited a squat brawny figure, with large bushy eyebrows, a beard of at least a week's growth, a snub nose, and a dirty face covered with a great profusion of matted whiskers, which would have been of a light color had they been clean. He had on a greasy night-cap, and red flannel shirt with the sleeves tucked up to the middle of the humerus, showing a pair of arms of very unusual strength; while blood and brains and knives and hatchets were strewed around on wooden blocks or on the floor. To tell the whole truth, I did not feel altogether comfortable, yet relying for self-defence on a lancet and my knowledge of anatomy, I advanced and announced the object of my visit to the figure, who answered surlily in unintelligible German. Having a smattering of the language, I said to him, "Ich wunsche ihre augen" (I want your eyes). "Meine augen" (my eyes), said he with a peculiar look; "Nein!" (no!) I then, in a mongrel compound of German, French and English, gave him to understand that I wanted oxen's eyes, and that I would pay him for his trouble. The word *pay* had a good effect, for he immediately showed me a long row of heads, and among them I recognized the one with the cancerous jaw which I had seen at the slaughter house, as well as a quantity of the bloody ends of meat or what are called the sticking pieces; to be mixed, I presumed, with fat pork after they were boiled, and then nicely seasoned with pepper and salt. He not only permitted me to take out the eyes, but also assisted to split open the heads and take out the brains. I went home, richly laden with my purchase, and uttered a eureka of the cause why sausages are sometimes poisonous. I intended to call public attention to the subject, but more important matters required all my time till the impression died away. I consoled myself with the idea that publicity enough had been given to an opinion of the composition of sausages, just as disgusting, though it is no more than fair to say I did not observe any young kittens during my visit.

To eat that which died of itself, or was torn by beasts, is not only inconsistent with scripture, but with common sense. The inference is natural, that an animal which died of itself suffered with disease; and that that torn by carnivorous animals which are liable to hydrophobia, is unsafe. To say nothing of canine madness, which is the direst and most certain of deaths, we have frequent opportunities of witnessing that the diseases of the lower animals may be communicated to man, and *vice* *versa.* Glanders may be communicated to the human subject, and butchers sometimes die of wounds poisoned by diseased oxen. When smallpox prevails, it may be taken by the cow, and, though somewhat modified, it may be again communicated to the human subject, and afford as perfect protection from another attack as if the patient had suffered the original disease. Although individual cases might be quoted showing that consumption is infectious, the truth of the assertion is by no means generally ascertained; yet its contagious nature is proved by, I believe, the only experiment recorded. The celebrated Laennec, when examining a scrofulous lung, cut his finger, which afterwards became inflamed and filled with tuberculous matter. As scrofula is emphatically a pig's disease, it cannot be supposed that pork can be always eaten with impunity, and that diseased flesh will not sometimes effect the constitution. We may thus explain, literally, certain passages of scripture which are considered metaphorical. Independently of the remorse and certain punishment for false worship, disobedience, murder, adultery, theft and falsehood, elsewhere recorded, it is stated in Leviticus xxvi., 14, 16.—"But if ye will not hearken unto me and will not do *all* these commandments," "I also will do this unto you, I will even appoint over you terror [hydrophobia?] consumption, and the burning ague that shall consume the eyes [typhoid fever from diseased flesh?] and cause sorrow of heart." The advantages, on the other hand, are stated at a former part of the chapter. "If ye walk in my statutes and keep my commandments and do them [so great will be the mental and bodily vigor you will acquire], five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred shall put ten thousand to flight. For I will have respect unto you and make you fruitful and multiply you." Again, in Exodus xv. 24—"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and keep *all* his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians."

From all that has been written, we may see the vast superiority of the laws of the Jews over those of the gentiles. While the citizens of New York pay fifteen thousand dollars a year for an inspector of tobacco, and considerable sums for inspectors of lime, lumber and charcoal, they have no inspector of animals, nor any unclean place where they may be slaughtered. The Jews, on the contrary, have a man whom they can trust to kill their animals, in a proper manner, and to point out to them by his seal the meat which is wholesome. That he may not be stimulated by want to place his mark improperly, each congregation gives its inspector five hundred dollars a year, and permits him to charge a fee of fifty cents for every ox which he seals. When a butcher, who supplies the Jews, wishes to provide for them, he selects one of the finest oxen, and sends for the inspector. A rope is cast round the animal, and he is drawn up with the aid of a pulley and windlass; the throat is exposed, and the inspector, with a long sharp knife, cuts it nearly to the spine at a single stroke. By the sharpness of the instrument and the extent of the wound, the blood gushes out in torrents; the animal is farther hoisted up; by degrees the red blood ceases to flow, and nothing comes from the wound but serum limpid as water. The carcase is then lowered; the inspector cuts into the chest; examines the heart and lungs; puts in his hand to ascertain if there are adhesions, and that all is healthy. He next examines the abdomen to observe the condition of the liver, &c.; and if he is satisfied, he thrusts a knife through portions of the flesh and fixes several leaden seals, impressed on one side with the Hebrew initial of the month, and on the other side with the day of the month, in a manner similar to that by which seals are attached to cloth. He is present again when it is cut into pieces, and affixes his seal to each portion. When Jews go to market, they can thus easily distinguish what kind of meat is healthy, and what, it is possible, may contain tubercles, abscesses, or sores.

[To be continued.

POISONING FROM COBALT—DEATH OF THE PATIENT.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Dear Sir,—Should you regard the following case of sufficient interest to occupy a place in the Journal, it is at your disposal.

At half past 7 o'clock, P. M., Sept. 26th, 1844, I was called, in great haste, to visit a child of Mr. Wm. Merrill, residing in an adjoining town, and about three miles distant, who, the messenger said, had taken, an hour before, some cobalt which had been prepared for the destruction of flies.

I found the patient—an interesting little boy and only child, aged 2 years—lying quietly asleep, with breathing easy and regular; pulse deviating but little from natural, except rather more frequent; surface of ordinary temperature; extremities warm; no tenderness manifested on pressure being made over the region of the stomach and bowels; no tumefaction. Vomiting took place freely in ten minutes after the poison had been swallowed, which continued to recur at short intervals for an hour or so, and by which considerable quantities of a fluid substance were ejected from the stomach. So free had been the emesis, and at so short a time after the poisonous draught had been taken, that I deemed it unnecessary to provoke it further by the administration of any emetical substance, and hence advised the free use of mucilaginous drinks and a dose of ol. ricini to move the bowels.

Supposing the deleterious agent had, in all probability, been removed from the stomach, and observing no portentous or alarming symptom present, I was led to believe that the little fellow would, in the end, recover. In the course of fifteen or twenty minutes he awoke, and I allowed a draught of warm milk to be given him, which was, in a short time, thrown up, and soon after this there occurred a copious dejection from the bowels; he was again easy and soon fell asleep. I had consented to remain through the night, and being somewhat fatigued, laid down, directing the attendants to call me should the symptoms indicate an unfavorable change. I had not lain long before I was aroused, and found my little patient alarmingly worse. Breathing hurried and laborious; pulse small and very frequent—could hardly be counted; thirst urgent and almost unquenchable; extremities cold; countenance expressive of great suffering and distress. I immediately commenced the use of mild opiates and the diffusible stimuli—ordered sinapisms to the feet, and frictions to be made upon the extremities, and then envelope them in hot flannels.

In about fifteen minutes he became comparatively easy; the pulse grew fuller and more distinct, the extremities warmer. This calm was, however, of short duration. The above-named threatening symptoms soon returned with increased violence, in despite of every effort to support the flagging powers of the system. The pulse became smaller, weaker and more frequent; the breathing more hurried, irregular and laborious; the extremities permanently cold, and covered with a clammy sweat; much writhing and other evidence of pain and suffering; the eyes rolled up and fixed in their orbits. Very soon all the symptoms acquired a most alarming and distressing degree of violence. The countenance assumed an exceedingly pale and sunken appearance; the pulse and vein became extinct; slight coma ensued; respiration ceased, and closed the painful scene at 2 o'clock the following morning—the patient having lived but 7½ hours after the cobalt was received into the stomach. I regret to say, there was no *post-mortem* examination made.

Allow me to remark, that our house-wives in this section of the country are, very generally, in the habit of employing the cobalt of the shops (which I presume is the peroxyd of the metal) for the destruction of flies. It is reduced to powder, put upon shallow dishes, simple warm water or sweetened water poured upon it, and then placed in convenient situations to be sipped by these troublesome little insects. And sometimes, through carelessness or inadvertency, it is left within the reach of children, who know no better than to eat it, and seeing the article is so generally used, the only wonder is, that its fatal effects are not more frequently experienced. Now I would caution all those who use this destructive agent, against carelessness or neglect, for it is, most assuredly, a very deadly poison.

Since the above case occurred, I have been informed that, in Churchville—a small village six miles east of my residence—during the past summer, a child died from taking the same substance. It lived but a few hours after the poison had been swallowed. And a little favorite dog of one of my neighbors, happened to lap a portion of it, and died in the course of an hour or two.

The above case is the only one of the kind I have ever witnessed, and I report it for the sake of gaining information—with the hope that you, or some one of your numerous correspondents, who has had experience in similar cases, will have the goodness to give us some light on the subject.

What is the nature of the action of cobalt on the animal economy—or, in what way does it produce death? What may be regarded as an antidote? or, in other words, what is the most rational course to be pursued in a case of poisoning from this article? and shall we class it with the other irritative mineral poisons? I am, dear sir, respectfully yours, &c.

North Bergen, N. Y., Nov. 4th, 1844. Lewis Hurd.

MERCURY, AS EMPLOYED BY HINDU PHYSICIANS.

[Communicated for the Boston Med. and Surg. Journal.]

MERCURY appears to have occupied, from remote antiquity, a prominent place in the materia medica of the Hindus. It has been so long in use, that it is difficult to determine at what period it was introduced. As it is described in some of the most ancient manuscripts, I conclude it must have been used for more than two thousand years.

Mode of Preparation.—The following is the most common method employed by practitioners in this part of India. The crude mercury is first mixed with a small quantity of turmeric. A quantity of sulphur simmered with butter is then added, and the whole thoroughly ground together. Another preparation, called "ashes of mercury," is sometimes employed. It is prepared in the following manner. Mercury is mixed with pulverized turmeric as before. A quantity of the juice of sorrel and tamarind leaves is then added, and the mass made into small cakes and dried. It is then burned in a close vessel for twenty-four hours, and is reduced to powder. These preparations are administered in similar doses, and with the same design, but the "ashes" is said to be rather more powerful in its operation.

Mode of Administration, &c.—This, like most other medicines, is seldom administered alone. The Hindus are peculiarly fond of combinations. In some fifteen or twenty prescriptions containing mercury, which I have examined, I have seldom found it combined with less than six, and frequently with as many as twenty or thirty other articles, so that it is difficult to determine in many cases what its specific effects may be. In the treatment of the following diseases it forms a prominent part.

1. In spleen, three grains are administered daily, in combination, until ptyalism is produced. This treatment is at variance with the practice of European practitioners in this country, who have usually found the most disastrous consequences resulting from the administration of mercury in spleen disease. The native practitioners, notwithstanding, are somewhat partial to it, and their treatment is frequently successful. It is probable that their mode of combination tends to counteract its unpleasant effects.
2. In continued fever, three grains daily are administered. This is considered as a powerful remedy.
3. In syphilis, two grains in combination, given daily, until ptyalism is produced, seldom fails to cure.
4. In diarrhœa, attended with febrile excitement, one grain is administered daily, in combination with thirty-nine other articles.

Mercury is also administered in many other diseases, but these examples will serve to illustrate its use. The Orientals, as before observed, are passionately fond of combinations, as the last prescription clearly indicates. They think that in variety there is the greater chance of success, since if one remedy fails, some one of the multitude must reach the disease and produce the desired effect.

Syphilis.—The following case may serve to illustrate the rapidity with which the people of this country frequently recover from the most loathsome diseases, when subjected to the power of medicine.

A Musselman, aged about 30, with syphilis of long standing, applied for relief. His personal appearance was most disgusting. He was wasted to a mere skeleton, and his body was covered with old cicatrices, the result of former disease. A foul, ragged ulcer, of the size of my hand, occupied the leg just below the knee, denuding the tibia at several points. A considerable portion of the scrotum had sloughed away, leaving the testicles exposed. The stench which his sores emitted was intolerable. To still the poor fellow's clamor for medicine, I gave him a few doses of calomel, not expecting he would survive more than a few days. He came back, however, in two or three days, and appeared to be no worse. I directed him to continue the calomel until copious ptyalism should be produced. As I saw him no more, I supposed he was dead, but was very much surprised, as well as gratified, some few weeks after, to meet him in the street, apparently quite recovered. His ulcers had healed, and he had become quite fleshy.

Fissure of the Soft Palate.—The following case appeared somewhat interesting to me, especially so as the result was unexpected.

A girl, about 12 years old, came to me with fissure of the soft palate. The fissure presented the following appearances. It was situated in the middle of the soft palate, and was about 1½ inch in length by ½ inch in breadth. Its edges were somewhat jagged and inflamed, with a slight discharge of pus. At about four lines to the left of this, I observed what appeared to be the commencement of a second fissure. She had experienced much difficulty in taking her food, as it constantly passed into her nose. From being, as her mother said, "an excellent singer," her voice had become very disagreeable, and she could articulate but with the greatest difficulty. As the disease was evidently of syphilitic origin, I gave calomel to produce ptyalism, and touched the borders of the fissure, daily, with the solution of nit. silver. In four weeks the small fissure had entirely disappeared, and the larger one was reduced by one half. Not suspecting that a cure could be effected without an operation, I proposed to pare the borders of the fissure, and unite them by sutures; but as I was about to commence the operation, the patient became frightened and fled. I saw her about one year after, when the fissure had entirely closed, and she experienced no difficulty in eating or articulating. Her mother informed me that she continued to improve from the time she left so abruptly, and in a few weeks was entirely cured.

Balasore, Hindostan, Aug. 10, 1844. O. R. Bacheler.

CASE OF LACERATED PERINEUM—OPERATION—CURE.

[We find the following case in the last No. of the New Orleans Medical Journal. It is related by Dr. William B. Lindsay, of Plaquemine, La.]

184–, May.—Madam R. is 30 years of age, delicately constituted, of a nervous temperament, a cultivated mind, and an estimable member of the society in which she lives. She has been married ten years; her general health has not been good since her marriage; she is the mother of three children. She informed me that during her last *accouchment* she was unfortunately attended by an old woman who calls herself a midwife. (There is always one like her in every village.) This famous character, always ignorant and frequently drunk, often made short work of her obstetrical cases, especially when dame nature was disposed to be a little tardy in her movements: in the present instance the child was forcibly taken from the mother, and a complete *laceration of the perineum* was the consequence. Ever since her delivery she has been confined to her room. The sphincter ani having been ruptured, she has been constantly troubled with involuntary alvine discharges, she has also labored under the most distressing pains caused by a prolapsus uteri; the uterus I found, on examination, hanging without the vulva. Never having had any case of the kind under treatment before, nor having ever seen an operation in any similar case, I did not promise to cure my patient. Death, however, being preferable to life in her present condition, she concluded to submit herself to my hands. Three or four days previously to operating, I put her upon a simple diet of milk and corn meal mush. I gave her daily a few grains of pulv. rhei, together with as many of super tartras potassæ, which kept her bowels in a free and easy state, and prevented the accumulation of indurated fæces in the rectum, which occurrence would, of course, have frustrated the success of the operation. She was placed upon her back from the first of the treatment, with directions to use no physical exertion; by means of a pillow the pelvis was elevated a little above the thorax, which position enabled me to return with facility the uterus to its proper situation.. At the appointed hour, with a female friend to console and encourage my patient, I commenced my operation. With a small dissecting forceps and a pair of bent scissors (such as are met with in any pocket-case), I cut away on each side the rough, unevenly cicatrized edges of the lacerated perineum, making, as well as I could, two clean cuts of six lines in width, and at least two and a half or three inches in length. It was necessarily tedious and painful, but my patient bore it well. I inserted three *interrupted sutures*, one near each end of the cuts, and one in the middle; the threads were passed through in a way best calculated to bring the opposing cut surfaces in apposition. She was allowed to remain in this condition three days, taking the medicines before mentioned daily. On the morning of the fourth day after the operation, I examined the wound and removed the sutures; the anterior or vaginal half of the wound was healed by the first intention, but to my sorrow I found the other half had not united, the fæces having passed through the inner part of the wound into the vagina, and escaped by the vulva. Having obtained her consent, I again cut anew the opposing surfaces which had not adhered. I found this tedious and difficult, as there was danger of undoing all that had been already effected. I inserted sutures again, and was careful to have the parts nicely adjusted. Diet and treatment same. On the morning of the third day I removed the sutures and found the wound united throughout by the first intention; the alvine discharges were now passed only per anum. I kept her in bed and on her back, and under the same diet and medicines for two days, at the expiration of which time she was entirely cured. Wounds in those parts, like wounds on the scalp, heal more kindly than in many other places, owing to the bountiful supply of blood which is carried to them. I cannot refrain from observing that my own satisfaction at the result of the operation, was only surpassed by the gratitude and delight of my patient. Within a year from this time she had intermittent fever and sent for me—I found her with severe *labor pains;* in an hour she was delivered of a fœtus three months old, which seemed to surprise her, as she stated distinctly that she had not the remotest idea of her situation. She recovered directly; since which time, I have not seen or heard from her, as I am not now living in several hundred miles of her.

ACTION OF WATER ON LEAD.

A VERY important communication has been made on this subject by Dr. Christison to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, which has been since published in their "Transactions" (Vol. XV., Part 2). A few years ago, the doctor was led to examine the water introduced into a dwelling by a lead-pipe, from a distance of three quarters of a mile. It was remarked that the water fresh drawn from the pipe *was perfectly transparent at first*, but on exposure to air, it quickly presented a white film, afterwards ascertained to be carbonate of lead. This water had been previously examined by Dr. Christison, and he had concluded that it contained salts enough to prevent corrosion of the lead, from the circumstance that several pieces of the fresh-cut metal retained their lustre when immersed in it for a period of fourteen days! "I did not," he observes, "at the time, advert to the difference between an experiment, in which some ounces of water were left at rest on a few square inches of lead, and one in which a column of water, only three quarters of an inch in diameter, flowed constantly over a surface of nearly 800 square feet." On analysis, this water was found to contain but a very small portion of saline matter (21,400th part), and the salts were of such a nature as to have the least protective influence. The remedy adopted, was to leave the spring water at complete repose in the pipe for a period of four months, so as to allow the carbonate to crystallize slowly and firmly on its interior. "This experiment was attended with complete success. The water was then found to flow without any impregnation of lead, and has done so ever since."

In another case, the water gave rise to the effect of slow poisoning by lead; and here again it was observed—a fact hitherto not noticed by toxocologists—that it was quite transparent when first drawn, and only acquired an incrustation of carbonate of lead after being exposed to air for some time. In this instance, the water contained a large proportion of saline matter (the 4460th part); but on analysis this chiefly consisted of chlorides—the salts which have the least effect in preventing the action of water on lead: while the really preventive salts, commonly contained in the terrestrial waters (sulphates and carbonates), were present only in the minutest places. Polished lead was found to be tarnished by it in a few hours. The remedy adopted in this case was to keep the pipes constantly full of a solution containing a 27,000th of phosphate of soda. After the lapse of about three months, it was found that the water contained no traces of lead.

This last case establishes, that it is impossible to determine merely from the quantity of saline matter contained in water, whether it is liable to become impregnated with lead or not. The salts may be of a nature to have little or no *protective influence* in the proportion in which they exist.

Dr. Christison has found by his experiments, that the compound produced under these circumstances is not, as it is commonly supposed to be, a pure crystalline carbonate of lead, but that it is formed of two equivalents of carbonate of lead with one equivalent of hydrated oxide of lead. This compound is permanent in the air, and is only converted to neutral carbonate by suspending it in water and treating it with a stream of carbonic acid gas. It would appear from the analysis of Mulder, confirmed by that of Christison, that even the white lead of commerce is not a pure carbonate, but a compound of four equivalents of carbonate to one equivalent of hydrate. The most simple method of preventing water from acquiring a poisonous impregnation by lead, available under all circumstances, is that of allowing it to remain for some months before use in the pipe or cistern. This gives time for a firm crystalline deposit of carbonate to attach itself to the surface of the metal, whereby all further action is prevented. It is not uncommon to find this deposit regarded by ignorant people as the result of the hardness of the water;—it is scraped off and a fresh surface of metal exposed, so that in a case of this kind, water from a particular cistern may have been for a long time used with impunity—and yet suddenly give rise to symptoms of lead-poisoning, probably to the surprise of the medical attendant and the parties affected.

The conclusions of Dr. Christison are of such importance in a medical point of view, that we here subjoin them. 1. Lead-pipes ought not to be used for the purpose of conveying water, at least where the distance is considerable, without a careful chemical examination of the water to be transmitted. 2. The risk of a dangerous impregnation of lead is greatest in the instance of the *purest* waters. 3. Water which tarnishes polished lead when left at rest upon it in a glass vessel for a few hours, cannot safely be transmitted through lead-pipes without certain precautions. Conversely, it is probable, though not yet proved, that if polished lead remain untarnished, or nearly so, for twenty-four hours in a glass of water, the water may be safely conducted through lead-pipes. 4. Water which contains less than about an 8000th of salts in solution, cannot safely be conducted in lead-pipes, without certain precautions. Even this proportion will prove insufficient to prevent corrosion, unless a considerable part of the saline matter consist of carbonates and sulphates, especially the former. 6. So large a proportion as 4000th, probably even a considerably larger proportion, will be insufficient, if the salts in solution be in a great measure muriates. 7. It is right to add, that in all cases, even though the composition of the water seems to bring it within the conditions of safety now stated, a chemical examination should be made of it after it has been running for a few days through the pipes. For it is not improbable that other circumstances, besides those hitherto entertained, may regulate the preventive influence of the neutral salts. (It may be here suggested whether organic matter in water, which has a strong tendency to combine with oxide of lead, may not have some influence.) 8. When the water is judged to be of a kind which is likely to attack lead-pipes, or when it actually flows through them, impregnated with lead, a remedy may be found either in leaving the pipes full of the water and at rest for three or four months, or by substituting temporarily for the water a weak solution of phosphate of soda, in the proportion of about a 25000th part. I have found that sulphate of lime, when it forms about the proportion of a 5000th part, also acts as a good preservative. This salt, as plaster of Paris, is easily procurable in most localities.—*British and Foreign Medical Review.*

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 20, 1844.

The National Institute at Washington.—The proceedings, thus far, of the Medical Department of the Institute, were detailed in a report presented at a late meeting of the Department, by Marcus C. Buck, M.D., the Secretary, extracts from which have been politely forwarded to us. The proceedings consist in reports and discussions on the various medical essays which have been presented to the Institute, and on the replies to the Department's Circular. This Circular was issued in January, 1843, and was soon after inserted in this Journal. With the extracts above alluded to, have been placed in our hands most of the communications which have been made to the Department, with reports on them by committees. We shall hereafter receive others, as they are ready for publication, and shall endeavor to find room for all which are likely to prove interesting to the readers of the Journal. An abstract of one was inserted in our last volume. As several of these communications are answers to the questions contained in the above-named Circular, we have concluded again to publish it, that the replies may be more readily understood. It may be found on our last page to-day. Among the papers which have been already forwarded to us, are—various replies to the Circular; an essay on fever, by Dr. Hodgkins, of London, an honorary member of the Institute, with two interesting reports on the same, and an essay on echinococcus and acephalocysts by the same author; a case of retained fœtus; and Dr. Miller's report of a case of colloid tumor. Other papers are in the hands of the officers of the Institute, but from various causes are not now ready for publication.—The Institute should receive the countenance and support of medical men throughout the Union; and we trust the publication of its papers, as announced above, will produce for it the favorable result which such a course always produces, and which nothing else can produce, for a meritorious scientific institution.

Lectures on Eruptive Fevers.—Another instructive volume has come from the medical press of Messrs. Lea & Blanchard, which will be well received by the profession. Dr. Chapman, of Philadelphia, is sparingly dealing out to the public, selections from his valuable lectures, but judiciously takes such parts as are of universal importance. Perhaps the name of the author will command as much confidence as that of any professed medical teacher in this country. It is one of the anomalies of modern times, that many of the leading men of the medical schools have but a limited influence beyond the portals within which their doctrines, and the theories they strive to establish, are promulgated. And the reason is obvious: the place they occupy is too frequently mistaken for the centre of the universe and the focus of knowledge. However distinguished a deserving man may be, and although he may shine a second sun in the firmament of his imaginary creation, it is only by addressing himself to the great world at large that he can hope for a true literary or scientific fame, or give a general character of authority to his opinions. Dr. Chapman has been a star of magnitude at home, whose rays are spreading and enlightening minds that would never have known that the author existed, were it not for his writings. We take pleasure, therefore, in announcing the appearance of another work, which cannot fail to have a circulation quite as extensive as the writings of his which have preceded it.

This is a treatise on *Eruptive Fevers, Hæmorrhages and Dropsies, Gout and Rheumatism.* As a whole, medical gentlemen will prize it—because it is not theoretical but eminently practical, and therefore a welcome messenger. It is a generous octavo, well printed and bound, containing 448 pages, and may be had at Ticknor & Co.'s in Boston.

Water-cure Journal.—Messrs. Campbell & Whitmarsh are the publishers of a newly-projected periodical with the above title, at Boston, New York and Philadelphia—which is spreading over considerable ground, and shows that an extensive circulation is contemplated. Before remarking upon other matters pertaining to this enterprise, we cannot refrain from saying a word about the publishers—who have our sympathy on account of the losses they have probably sustained in by-gone days, by being connected with publications invariably opposed to the prevailing opinions of a majority of mankind. Mr. Campbell sustained the dead weight of the Graham Journal on his own shoulders, till he was finally obliged to step from under the load, when it went to the ground, where the offensive originator of the doctrine soon found himself—abandoned by that coterie of bran-bread reformers, who fancied themselves, for awhile, high commissioners, with authority to dictate what kind of pudding should be tolerated in civilized states. Was there not, also, a journal sent forth by Mr. Whitmarsh, with a declared intention of driving money out of the market? If the editor had carried his original intentions thoroughly into operation, the singular spectacle of bartering a thing for which one had *no use, for something which he must have*, would have been quite common in this country. It would have been, on a large scale, precisely what is done daily in a small way in the pawn-shops. There garments, silver spoons, and other unnecessary appendages of over-civilization, are exchanged—and for what?

To return—these gentlemen, for whom we have a personal respect, from a conviction that they are desirous of doing good in their day and generation, provided it can be done according to their notions of what good is, are once more embarked in a new cause. The Water-cure Journal, edited by Joel Shew, M.D., like all last novelties, is presented as the great needful: the philospher's stone has been discovered; it is water—scientifically applied, inside and out. But it will be labor in vain to reiterate the old vulgarities of Priessnitz, with an expectation of making people of intelligence the dupes of the would-be water kings, who are hoping to get into notice, and who doubtless will to a certain extent. It is all of a piece with homœopathy, defunct Grahamism, Mesmerism, and some other isms that are disgraceful to the character of the present age.

Medical Matters in Maine.—Last season some comments were made on the objectionable policy of the Trustees of the Medical School at Brunswick. On inquiry, it is discovered that they are still pursuing the same course, which will by-and-by end, we fear, in still further injury to the institution. A resident faculty is its only redemption from mediocrity—and certainly the only method that can be adopted for raising it up to that proud position which it might and should have in the thrifty state of Maine.

Is there another college among us so singularly conducted? The professors journey from east, west, north and south, towards the appointed place, air the damp halls, kindle fires, take the fees, lecture fast, and leave the place. Thus the faculty and the students are mostly strangers to the town, and to each other, and, for all practical purposes, so far as the lecturers are concerned, might as well have a course in the cabin of the steamboat which conveys them there. Whenever the trustees fairly perceive that they are injuring the prospects of a school, which is still creditable to the State, it is presumed they will be ready to give place to those who may see, before it is entirely too late, that a resident faculty of medicine is indispensable to the welfare of the school. It would effectually prevent the organization of a new one, either at Bangor or Portland. If such a movement is made in a place where there is medical talent of a high order, it would probably ever after keep down the tardy efforts of the Medical Department of Bowdoin College.

Health of New Orleans.—From the third No. of the New Orleans Medical Journal—which periodical we supposed had come to an untimely end, from not having heard anything of it since the appearance of No. 1

—we extract the following gratifying intelligence respecting the health of that city.

"The health of New Orleans was perhaps never known to be better than from the beginning of this year up to the present time. No epidemic whatever has prevailed, and the most extensive practitioners of the place unite in the testimony that they have never had less to do during the same period.

"The summer has been one of the hottest ever experienced; with frequent showers during July and August, as will be seen by the abstract of our meteorological tables. Thus it would appear we have had a large share of *two*, of what have generally been considered the most *essential agents* in the production of the remote cause of summer and autumnal diseases, i. e. *heat* and *moisture*. As to the other ingredients, viz., *dead vegetable and animal matter*, one would suppose there was never any deficiency about such a place as New Orleans. Well, we have here all the *hypothetical elements* of *hypothetical malaria*—but where are the much dreaded consequences? We will go on with our statement of facts, and our readers may draw their own conclusions. The Mississippi, which runs along the border of our city for about three miles, has probably not been higher within *fifty years* past. Its waters being considerably above the level of the city, were permitted by means of culverts to pass into the gutters, and thus to flow along the principal streets in continued streams to the swamp in the rear. These lively streams, to the width of at least a mile along the heart of the city, have continued to flow from May to about the 10th of September, when their source was cut off by the falling of the river. The descent from the river to the swamp, is about four or five feet; lessening as you recede, till the waters in the gutters at the back part of the city (a distance of a half to three quarters of a mile), are almost stagnant. The scavengers usually draw out the thick muddy contents, with hoes, and after drying, it is carted off. The supply of fresh water this season must have had a salutary influence upon these *filthy sewers*. Since the decline of the river, an immense *batture* along the whole extent of the city has been exposed to the rays of an autumnal sun, but little mitigated by clouds or rain, for four or five weeks past. The effluvia from this batture is quite offensive, both in the morning and evening.

"Such is the state of the case; and under such influences, New Orleans has been, and continues to be, one of the healthiest cities in the world."

Medicinal Action of Cochineal.—Since the attention of the medical profession has been directed to the use of cochineal, its efficacy in hooping cough has been confirmed on all sides. Prof. Schneemann has employed it in Munich with the most favorable results. Cochineal is, however, not only used in the form of powder, as already mentioned, but may also be advantageously combined as a *linctus*, with syrup. But it must be observed that the carbonates of soda and potash, which dissolve its active principle, and form a new combination with it, constitute an essential principle of the remedy. Cream of tartar does not seem to answer so well in combination with it, as either of the above alkaline carbonates.—*Buchner's Repertorium.*

Otitis Chronica.—Professor Velpeau recommends the following treatment in chronic external otitis, with, or without, discharge:—1. Inject into the meatus auditorius, successively, one of these solutions, each being employed a week: decoctum hordei, sweetened with honey; a weak solution of the plumbi acetas; a decoction of the folia juglantis regiæ.—2. Drink, during the whole time, as a tisanne, an infusum foliorum juglantis regiæ.—*London Medical Times.*

Fissure of the Anus.—Professor Trousseau recommends Dr. Bretonneau's treatment in this disease, viz., lotions with an infusion of ratanhia: ℞. Rad. ratanh. ℈v.; aquæ bullient. lbij. M. If the fissure is superficial, the patient may make use of a sponge imbibed with the lotion; but, when it is deep-seated, he must make use of a *clysopompe*, allowing the water to flow back as injected, so as to wash the part; this must be done for about five minutes. A few days are sufficient to obtain a cure. Cauterization with the nitras argenti is likewise a good means of obtaining their cicatrization.—*Gaz. des Hopitaux.*

Medical Miscellany.—Dr. Andrews, of Cambden, N. J., was recently thrown from his carriage and seriously injured.—The Cleaveland, Ohio, Medical School is said to have a hundred students the present term.—A Mrs. Jordan, of Boston, advertises in the Providence Daily Journal, that she will be in that city and ready to practise *pathetism*, on Monday, Dec. 2d!!—A meeting of physicians was to be held in New York, last Friday, to express sentiments of respect for the memory of the late Dr. Forry.—It is stated in the New Orleans Medical Journal that the towns and villages throughout the Southern States are more healthy than the country residences.—Mr. M'Diarmid recommends a solution of ten grains of tartar emetic in an ounce of distilled water as a counter-irritant application, to be used in lieu of the ung. antim. tart., the use of which is disagreeable to many persons.

Dr. Bigelow's Introductory.**—Next week the Journal will contain the whole of Professor Bigelow's Introductory Lecture, delivered at the opening of the present lecture term in Boston.**

MARRIED,—At Philadelphia, Dr. Thomas A. Reilly to Miss H. Harding.—At Hinsdale, N. Y., Dr. Wm. W. Welsh, of Norfolk, Conn., to Miss E. Collin.—At Norwich, Conn., Dr. A. G. Gambril, U. S. N., to Miss L. Beers.—In Boston, Dr. J. A. Leseur to Miss F. Wilkinson.—At Albany, Dr. Alanson Abbe, of Boston, to Miss M. L. Douw.—At Montreal, Dr. Louis E. Landry to Miss A. Quesnel.

DIED,—At New York, Samuel Forry, M.D., editor of the New York Journal of Medicine, late of the U. S. Army, and formerly of Gettysburg, Penn.—At Lockport, N. Y., Dr. Edward T. Ferguson, 25, of Aberdeen, Scotland—a son of Dr. Ferguson, of that city.

Number of deaths in Boston for the week ending Nov. 16, 29.—Males, 17; Females, 12. Stillborn, 8. Of consumption, 5—drowned, 1—lung fever, 2—old age, 2—disease of the heart, 1—scarlet fever, 3—croup, 1—typhus fever, 2—liver complaint, 1—infantile, 1—teething, 2—abscess, 1—debility, 1—hæmorrhage, 1—convulsions, 1—inflammation of the bowels, 2—bilious fever, 1—fits, 1.

Under 5 years, 8—between 5 and 20 years, 4—between 20 and 60 years, 13—over 60 years, 4.

National Institute.—The following is the Circular issued by the Medical Department of the Institute.

1. What is the medical topography of your district or section of country, and have you any extensive sources of malaria?

2. What has been the effect of agriculture, the felling and clearing off the forests, the draining and cultivation of the soil, upon the climate, upon the health of the inhabitants, and upon the character of disease?

3. What manufactories are there in your district, and what is their effect upon the constitution and health of the operatives?

4. What epidemic and endemic diseases have occurred under your observation, or of which you can get a correct account from others?

5. What has been the character of the fevers of your district, what the cause, what the most successful mode of treatment, what the pathological changes found upon examination after death, and how far is there proof that they have under any circumstances been transmitted by contagion?

6. What change has taken place in the type of disease within a series of years in your district, and to what is such change to be ascribed?

7. What is the average duration or probability of human life in your population; has it increased within a number of years, and in what proportion, and from what causes?

8. What is the relative degree of health and longevity of the whites and blacks, the increase and mortality of each?

9. What is the relative degree of health, longevity, and increase of the slaves and free blacks; which suffers most from the influence of our epidemic diseases; and what are the causes which produce different results in these respects upon the two classes?

10. What is the annual number of marriages, births, and deaths, to each thousand of your population, and what is the proportion of male and female children born?

11. Have you any cases of great longevity; what have been the occupation and habits of such persons, and were they natives of your district or emigrants, and from what country and place?

12. Have you any persons who live exclusively upon a milk or vegetable diet, and what is the apparent effect of such diet upon the duration of life, the health, strength, and activity of the body and mind?

13. What has been the effect of the temperance reformation upon the strength and health of your citizens?

14. The history of any interesting cases of disease which may have occurred under your observation, and especially in which the pathology was ascertained by *post-mortem* examination, will be regarded as valuable. The discovery of new therapeutic agents, or the new application of old ones; also, meteorological observations, with whatever else illustrates the origin, progress, nature and cure of diseases?

15. Pathological specimens of morbid structure, with an accompanying history of the origin, progress, and termination of the cases, will be highly acceptable. Such specimens will bear the name of the donor, and be placed in the National Museum.

16. As one object of the Institute is the formation of a Library, the undersigned will be obliged by the presentation of a copy of your own medical works or those of others, which it may be convenient for you to bestow.

All communications should be addressed to Francis J. Markoe, Jr., Esq., Washington, Corresponding Secretary of the National Institute.